

Message Text

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14
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

66011
DRAFTED BY:M:CT:RMYERS
APPROVED BY:M:CT:RMYERS
S/S-O:AWOTTO
----- 080901
O 240344Z SEP 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236826 TOSEC 270690

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM BEIRUT DATED SEPTEMBER 23, 1976 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO DAMASCUS IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7643

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, CY, LE, US, ASEC
SUBJECT: TERRORISM: LEBANESE GROUP DEMANDS FOR HOSTAGE RELEASE

REF: (A) NICOSIA 2946, (B) DEPARTMENT TELEXCON ITEM 16

1. OUR REACTION ON RECEIVING REFTTEL A WAS THAT IT WAS A
HOAX, PERPETRATED BY SOMEONE WHO IS MENTALLY ILL, FOR THE
FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. WE WERE AND ARE UNAWARE OF ANY AMERICANS MISSING
IN LEBANON OR ELSEWHERE AND COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT 29
AMCITS AND 18 CITIZENS OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES COULD
HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED HERE OR ELSEWHERE AND BE HELD HOSTAGE
IN LEFTIST-CONTROLLED LEBANON WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION
BECOMING KNOWN TO US. WE HAVE NOT, OF COURSE, CHECKED
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WHEREABOUTS OF EVERY AMERICAN CITIZEN STILL IN LEBANON, BUT

ALLEGED NUMBERS OF HOSTAGES INVOLVED SEEM TO US TO
MAKE THIS STORY INCREDIBLE.

B. RANSOM DEMANDED IS AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT WHICH
SEEMS TO HAVE NO RELATION TO NUMBER OF HOSTAGES OR ANY

RATIONAL EXPLANATION.

C. ASSERTION THAT HOSTAGES ARE BEING HELD IN THREE
DIFFERENT PLACES IN LEFTIST-HELD TERRITORY IN LEBANON
WHILE CONTACT WITH "JANE" AND PRESUMABLY MONEY TRANSFER
IS TO TAKE PLACE IN EAST BEIRUT IMPLIES AN OPERATIONAL
CAPABILITY WHICH IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE IN
LEBANON TODAY. EVEN A MAJOR EXTREMIST CHRISTIAN,
MUSLIM OR FEDAYEEN GROUP (WHICH WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS
IS) WOULD BE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT FOR OPERATIONAL
ASSETS TO CARRY OUT SUCH AN OPERATION.

D. ALTHOUGH LETTER SAYS DEMAND IS TO BE RESPONDED
TO WITHIN 48 HOURS OF ITS DELIVERY AT EMBASSY NICOSIA,
SENDER COULD NOT KNOW WITH ANY DEGREE OF PRECISION
EXACT TIME LETTER RECEIVED. IF DEMAND WERE SERIOUS,
PERPETRATOR WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE SET A PRECISE DATE
(SEE PARA 4 BELOW).

2. IF THERE IS A POLITICAL INTENT IN THIS LETTER, IT
MAY BE TO DAMAGE THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE. USE OF FRENCH
TENDS TO INDICATE CHRISTIAN AUTHORSHIP AND JOUNIEH
RETURN ADDRESS ON ENVELOPE, NEWSPAPERS TO BE USED, AND
LOCATION OF JANE'S TELEPHONE CONTACT ARE ALL ASSOCIATED
WITH CHRISTIAN-HELD LEBANON. ALLEGED PLACE OF
DETENTION OF HOSTAGES, HOWEVER, IS OUTSIDE OF
CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY, THUS PREVENTING
INVESTIGATION BY CHRISTIAN AUTHORITIES.

3. FOR REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE WE ARE STILL INCLINED
TO BELIEVE LETTER IS A MACABRE HOAX. HOWEVER, WE DID NOT
RECOGNIZE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILDENHALL AND STROMFJORD
AND DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE TO
US.

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4. WE HAVE JUST COME ACROSS ADVERTISEMENT FOR HAWANA
TRAVEL AND TOURISM (EX-EAGLE) IN SEP 14 L'ORIENT-LE
JOUR. HAWANA OFFERS FULL RANGE OF TRAVEL AGENCY
SERVICES INCLUDING "DAILY POSTAL COURIER, TELEX AND
TELEGRAPH SERVICE." ADDRESS IS JOUNIEH, PLACE
CENTRALE, IMM. CHIHA, TEL 930845-934692; BYBLOS -
RUE MAR YOUHANNA - IMM AKRA. HAWANA'S SLOGAN IS

"TOUJOURS EN AVANT" (ALWAYS AHEAD). HAWANA IS
APPARENTLY ONE OF THE MANY TRAVEL AGENCIES FACILITATING
COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN CYPRUS AND
CHRISTIAN-HELD LEBANON.
LANE UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1976
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Disposition History: n/a
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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04 MAY 2006

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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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